

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim ~~1~~ and insert therefor the following new Claim 59, which is directed to the same class of invention, and patentable invention, as examined Claims 1-7:

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-- 59. A method for modifying a tobacco curing barn provided with a direct fire heating unit for the purpose of providing conditions suitable for curing tobacco such that resulting cured tobacco obtained from said barn possesses a tobacco-specific nitrosamine content lower than that obtained prior to such modification, the method comprising:

removing the direct fire heating unit from the tobacco barn,

providing the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides in a fashion that would cause contact between said nitric oxides and said tobacco within said barn, and further modifying said barn to permit correlation of the tobacco-specific nitrosamine content of said cured tobacco with the actual level of nitric oxides to which said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves.--.

Please cancel Claims ~~2-4~~.

Please amend Claims 5, 6, and 7, as follows:

2₅ (Amended) The method of Claim ~~5~~¹ whereby nitric oxide levels within the barn during curing approximate that of ambient, environmental air surrounding the barn.

3₆ (Amended) The method of Claim ~~6~~¹ whereby the barn is equipped with a heat exchange unit.

4₇ (Amended) The method of Claim ~~7~~¹ whereby the barn is equipped with an electrical heating unit.

Please cancel claims ~~8-58~~.

REMARKS

21